

Encountering, Growing, Participating

During the month of January, we are revisiting the St James vision statement. The vision is not a series of tasks and aims to be achieved, but concentrates on the person of God.

1. Encountering God
2. Growing as followers of Jesus (who is God with us)
3. Participating in the life of his Spirit (who is God sustaining and enabling us)

The heart of the vision is about the pursuing God, God the creator, God the redeemer, God the giver of life.

Read Ephesians 3. 14-21

Christians experience God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Look back at Paul's prayer and note how Paul is incorporating the three persons (Trinity) in his prayer.

Fabian, in his talk, said that Paul does not believe in the power of prayer as such, but in the power of the One who hears our prayer.

- What is the difference?

Paul prays for the believers because he has no doubt either that God has inexhaustible resources at his disposal nor that out of them he will be able to answer his prayer. He is confident in God's ability, God's outworking and God's good intentions towards his people. In this prayer, Paul shows us what we need to pray for. We need to pray for strength, for love, for knowledge and for fullness.

- Find those four aspects in the prayer.
- What do you need most now? Why?
- At the start of this New Year, do you have renewed hopes and intentions for your life of prayer? What are they?
- How can you help each other to persevere? What can you do as a home group?

If this prayer was like a staircase, the last step would be the request to be filled with all the fullness of God. This reality won't be fully realized until the end of time. However, your call is to be a sign of what is to come and therefore your prayer should aim high. You are called to become like Christ who is the fullness of God.

Use the prayer Fabian has provided in the bulletin to pray in your home group and to pray throughout the week:

- *It is because you are a loving Father that I/we can ask you according to the riches of your glory to strengthen me/us and your church, St James, with power through your Spirit.*
- *Father, I/we also ask that you would increase my/our faith and that I/we would experience Christ's dwelling presence as I/we walk with you.*
- *Father, I/we also ask that you would help _____ to understand the limitless love of Jesus.*
- *Finally, I/we ask that you would fill me/us with all the fullness of yourself. Fill me/us all with greater thoughts of you. Fill me/us with a greater desire to see more of you and be filled with your presence.*